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distant times. "For all Thy servants departed this life in Thy fear and love, we bless and praise Thy holy name." But we go on to say, "With angels and archangels, *and with all the glorious company of heaven*" we join our worship and adoration. Without venturing into regions of speculation, may we not gladden our hearts as we sing the magnificent "Te Deum," by remembering our own beloved dead—by conceiving of their place in the vast chorus of praise in which even we are allowed our humble share? "We are come," says the writer of the Hebrews, "to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, *to the general assembly and church of the first-born and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*" May we not then rejoice in our belief in this glorious communion of saints, saints in all countries, in all ages, saints in this world, and saints already in the next—is there any other communion so universal, so far-reaching, so eternal, so all-embracing?

With thankfulness and gladness well may we each say, "I believe in the communion of saints."

THE
EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF GREAT BOOKS.
JOB.

THE poet said "the saddest of all words of tongue or pen are these: 'It might have been.'" And ah! how often do they rise unbidden to our lips! How little serves to strike that tense chord within us!—the smiling of a child whose brightness speaks of all the day-dreams fraught with boundless hope, the silence of an evening when the landscape seems to gently close its eyelids after having watched the glories of the sunset, the falling of the leaves, the passing of the year during the course of which so much was left undone, some half-forgotten melody linked with sweet memory of the past, a grave in which not only all the future, but even the present seem to have been entombed—all these, and many other things, remind us how seldom we "drink life to the lees."

But was the poet right? Are, "It might have been!" indeed the saddest words? Surely there are moods so piteous that *sadness* is not the true expression. It was *sadness* made Job curse the day of his birth, and pray for death; but it was *despair* made him exclaim, "If I had called, and He had answered me, yet would I not believe that He had hearkened unto my voice. For He breaketh me *without a cause* . . . Oh! that I might come even to His seat. But I cannot behold Him; *He hideth Himself*" And throughout the book of Job there is the agony of the question, "Why *is* there injustice in God's dealings? Why *do* the righteous suffer and the wicked flourish?" It is a question every religion must answer, for it perplexes every heart. *We* have the answer; but it is not to find the answer that we read the book of Job; the answer is not there. And yet Job was restored to peace of mind, for "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." How was Job satisfied? We shall see.

But before entering upon my subject, let me say a few words with regard to the object of these notes on "The Educational Value of Great Books." So much has already been said about the ever-living works of men of genius, that

it may seem superfluous even to remind one that they are the most precious inheritance of each successive generation. But it is often the most self-evident truths that bear most repetition. Are the great books we all have on our shelves valued and used as they should be? Do we derive the constant benefit from them which only a true knowledge of their message can impart? You know how snow-clad mountains change their hue as day advances, saffron in the clear still dawn, so white at dazzling noon, then fading to the faintest blue, till, in the evening, comes the flush from the far-setting sun, fit prelude to the night through which the stars shine oh! so brightly over the dim mountains deep in slumber and so weird and still. So in all ages, and in all moments of our life, the great books stand prominent, changing only in aspect as we progress upon the road of life. For the weak they have a store of strength, and for the sad full comfort. They purify the gladness of the happy and direct the steps of the victorious. Throughout our lives they stand in readiness upon our shelves, and we can go to them already when "shades of the prison house begin to close" upon us, or in the prime of life, or in the evening, when their words are full of reminiscence of the past, and when the first stars twinkle in the greyness of the east, as if to reassure us that there are suns which shine even in the dark obscurity of night. If these few notes lead some to hold communion with the minds that live in the world's classics, their object will have been achieved.

The book of Job has been called a drama; and in one sense it is a tragedy. As Lamartine says, "there are three protagonists, God, man and destiny—and what more sublime conception could a poet have? But drama, strictly speaking, is not to be found in Hebrew literature; the genius of the Semitic races tends far rather to the sublime lyric poetry which abounds in the earlier psalms and the song of Solomon, in the books of Joel, Amos, Hosea and Isaiah, in the lovely psalms of the Exile, in Jeremiah's writings, and lastly in the books of Esdras, Nehemiah and Malachi. The whole literature of the Jews is full of pure lyric song to God—and how should it be otherwise? God was everything to them—the Almighty Lord was present everywhere, and the whole world was nothing but His footstool. This religion was full of awe and respect for an immense, all-powerful, omniscient Creator.

And was not that the natural outcome of their life in those wild boundless deserts, which are the very picture of infinity and solitude? Their minds were able to understand the meaning of the term infinity, for their eyes beheld the infinite each day and all night long; they could realise what solitude meant—what more lonely than those inhospitable wastes "where no man is"? And in their family life the father ruled supreme, despotic head of wife and children. There was monotheism in the air they breathed; they could not but think of God as the despotic Lord of the Creation. It is extraordinary to what a great extent our thoughts of God are moulded by what our earthly father is or seems to us to be. It is to the Jewish race that the world owes its most lofty and most pure conception of the Godhead. Men who looked upon things concerning God as being beyond discussion—"too wonderful for them"—could not progress in art or science. All the faculties of heart and head were concentrated in the sublime worship which kept them in the way of that great religion destined to prepare the world for Christianity. It was only when the Jews came in touch with foreign races that philosophy and grammar occurred to them. The prophets who represent the true spirit of Judaism were ever loud in recalling them from the strange gods to the pure worship of Jehovah. And, indeed, that was their true mission; they seem to have had that exalted religion from the earliest times as if by inspiration; and even Job could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."

Job was the greatest of all the men of the east, and in God's eyes there was none like him in the earth; he was the instructor of many, and the strengthener of weak hands. He says that in the days of his youth when the secret of God was upon his tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with him, when his children were about him, when he washed his steps with butter and the rock poured him out rivers of oil; when he went out to the gate through the city, when he prepared his seat in the street, the young men saw him and hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up; the princes refrained from talking and laid their hand on their mouth... he delivered the poor that cried and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for

joy. He put on righteousness and it clothed him; his judgment was as a robe and a diadem. He was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. He was a father to the poor, and the cause which he knew not he searched out. Unto him men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at his counsel; they waited for him as for the rain. He chose out their way and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners. Such was the man whom Satan was authorised to prove. When Satan touched all that he possessed, Job rent his mantle and said: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." When Satan touched his bone and flesh, Job said: "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" "In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

Then came Job's friends, and during seven days and seven nights durst not speak a word to him, "for they saw that his grief was very great." The agony of those seven days' silence is measured by Job's first words, "Let the day perish wherein I was born. . . ." What a contrast to the last words of the man whose "substance was increased in the land"! Now it is the bitter in soul, longing to be where the prisoners rest together, where the weary are at rest. When he, about whose house God made a hedge, exclaims "I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; *yet* trouble came," we realize to what a depth of misery he has sunk. How terrible are the outbursts of trouble and despair, when, after seven days' patient silence, his heroic endurance gives way: "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery and longs for death? The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me. I was not in safety and yet trouble came." He tries to justify all his bitter words by declaring that his calamity is heavier than the sand of the sea. He is in such extremity of pain that he prays God to loose His hand and cut him off; and, turning to his friends, he tells them that he seeks nothing of them, save to be taught wherein he had erred. He wishes to be frank with them, but his wild anguish terrifies them and they move to leave him.

He tries to speak more gently, but gradually as he records his sufferings he is wrought upon, and says: "I will complain in the bitterness of my soul," and other words more rebellious follow: "What is man that Thou shouldest try him every moment?" He realises the full insignificance of man face to

face with his Maker; "lo! He goeth by me, and I see Him not; He taketh away, who can hinder Him?" How impossible it is for him to speak to God, to reason with Him, for he is broken without a cause, aye, without a cause, for he has striven to do right, and has done nothing to deserve so great an evil. Surely God destroyeth the perfect as well as the wicked; if not, where or who is He? He feels weary of life, and asks for nothing but to be shown wherefore God, who knew that he was not wicked, contended with him. In his abjectness and suffering he asks to be left alone, that he may take comfort a little before he go whence there is no return.

The end of Chapter x. marks Job's utmost material despair—confusion and darkness, and it is then that Zophar speaks to him of the assured blessing of repentance! Job asks for bread and they give him a stone. No wonder if he remind them that he is not inferior to them, and that they only tell him things which everyone knows. Even the beasts, fowls, fishes recognise the power and glory of God. "Ask now the beasts and they shall tell thee!" and Job repeats, only with double emphasis, all that Zophar has said concerning God's marvellous power and wisdom. "Shall not His excellency make you afraid? O that ye would altogether hold your peace, ye forgers of lies, ye physicians of no value!" And he turns to God and bids Him call, for he would answer. "How many are mine iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin . . . wherefore holdest Thou me for Thine enemy? Turn from me, that I may rest; for, though there is hope of a tree which through the scent of water will bud, man dieth, and where is he? They shall not be awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." And in his suffering, Job says to his friends: "I could speak as ye do if your soul were in my soul's stead; for though I speak, my grief is not assuaged, and though I forbear, what am I eased?"

In his terror he sees the visitations of God as if his enemies compassed him about. In that terrible passage (ch. xvi.) he speaks indiscriminately of God and of his enemies; but it is after that spasm of delirium that there comes the touching prayer, "O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry have no place. Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. My friends scorn me, but mine eye

poureth out tears unto God. O! that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour! When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return. Where is now my hope? I have said to corruption, thou art my father." And how pathetic is the next outburst of Job's despair; full of terror, suffering and bitterness. For the fifth time he listens to the same argument of his friends, regarding the punishment of the wicked; and he turns to them and says, "Be it indeed that I have erred, what of that, compared to all I suffer? I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; my breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body. Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me. Oh that my words were now written! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." How vapid now seem Zophar's moralizings, "The triumph of the wicked is short. This is the portion of the wicked." And how we sympathise with the untruth with which Job answers Zophar, "Wherefore *do* the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?" And when Eliphaz accuses Job of manifold errors, Job turns away. "O that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat! There the righteous might dispute with Him. but He hideth Himself that I cannot see Him." To the very end Job affirms his innocence. "God forbid that I should justify you! till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me." And in the subsequent *parable* Job gives an account of all he was, compared with what he is become since God touched him, and he makes a solemn protestation of his integrity. After that, Job's words are ended, and there is another awful silence, until God's voice is heard out of the whirlwind. And what could Job answer to those wonderful words, but, "Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer Thee?"

There are two questions which are certain to perplex many when this point is reached. Why was Job satisfied? God refused to answer any of his questions, and merely crushed him by the sense of omnipotence. But God accepted him, and we can see why. But let us first consider the other question. Why was God's wrath kindled against Eliphaz and against his two friends? Are not their words of comfort and

remonstrance full of pity and truth? No doubt; but like the shallow lore of Polonius, all their wisdom comes from the head instead of the heart. Polonius utters many words as beautiful as the well-known "To thine own self be true," but they are all quotations from Euphues. In the same way Eliphaz and Bildad have their "windlasses and assays of bias." The one says, "Now a thing was secretly brought to me in thoughts from the visions of the night," and the other bids Job "enquire of the former age and prepare himself to the search of their fathers," or again, "I will show thee that which wise men have told from their fathers." When Job's three friends take for granted that Job has sinned, they miss the point. Clearly Job had erred, as all men must; but he could say with perfect honesty that he was innocent, because he knew that he had always striven to do God's will, and had committed no wrong deserving so great a punishment. "In all this did not Job sin with his lips." That was what constituted his integrity. His despair had only burst the self-control when "all this evil" had weighed upon him seven days. The arguments of Job's friends, taken by themselves, are true enough; applied to his case they are quite false. Over and over again we find words as beautiful as is the exclamation, "Happy is the man whom God correcteth," but how inappropriate are they to assuage the terrible despair to which Job gives utterance! They are evaporated by the fierceness of his passion like water which is poured upon a blazing furnace. But this is not enough to account for God's wrath. "They had not spoken right," we are told; nor had Job—and yet God accepted Job. Why? Clearly because Job prayed for his friends: "and the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends." This gives the reason why God was wroth with Job's friends. In spite of all their wisdom and piety, it had not occurred to them to pray to God, to make intercession for their stricken friend, to turn to God with confidence, with the assurance that He would accept the burnt offering of a faithful heart;—sure proof that all their comfort was cold—that it was no heart-feeling, but mere words; wise words, no doubt, some of them very beautiful, but all lacking that vital warmth which only true deep love and sympathy can give.

And now the other question needs no answer—Job was content because the Lord had given him the power to pray.

How sweet and sudden, like the scent of flowers after an evening thunder-shower, is the peace which breathes in Job's words: "I know that Thou can't do everything. . . . Hear I beseech Thee and I will speak. . . . I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee." Job has been translated into the life which is sustained by prayer, prayer which opens our minds to infinite secrets of the soul. We hear "the morning stars still singing together, and all the sons of God shouting for joy." We dimly feel that we are moving towards the consummation of all things, and our fitful hearts occasionally throb in unison with the vast music of the spheres. Our minds range free from thought to thought, through space and darkness, even to God's very seat, where only prayer can stoop, silent, with veiled eyes in the beams of love.

And if the Lord refused to answer Job except out of the whirlwind, a time was coming when God would speak, not of His terrible power, not of His awful attributes, not of His marvellous works, but rather of a child and of a virgin-mother. The opening of Isaiah's book is strangely knit with the book of Job. There is the same longing for sincerity in both; Isaiah expresses it by the words: "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me." And Isaiah also says: "Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." All these virtues Job had practised. But God is no longer the defiant voice in the whirlwind: "Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him?" It is: "Come, now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. . . . Judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and My vineyard. What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" How beautiful is this transition from the jealous God to the living Father of the Messiah to be! and how profound the lesson! For it is on the feeling of God's power and of our own weakness that all religion must be founded; this is the rock on which our faith must stand, otherwise it is impossible to understand the full meaning of the gospel of love. Before God spake to him, and in spite of his despair, Job did not realise his own weakness. It was only afterwards that his eye saw God, and that his mind was capable to feeling the need of the "everlasting arms." "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing."

MOSES: A STUDY.

BY THE EDITOR.

Hebrews xi. 24—26.

* * * * *

—SUCH entrance had the tempter won to soul
Less single, faithful, free from self. For him,
The lesser praise of sacrifice is lost
In high obedience, that perceives no choice;
In faith, so fixed on glories of the promise,
That all immediate and more personal good
Devoid of lustre shows, uncertain, dim,
Like men and trees and shapes of earth to eyes
Long filled with splendours of a western sun.
Happy the people are in such a case!
Yea, blest are they for whom their God provides
Deliverer so meet!

* * * * *

"It came into his heart to visit his brethren."

Some souls there are, confined in given sphere,
Who feel within an energy divine
That could, with freer scope, do mighty things:
They see high work untouched around them lie,
The work sure inner witness ear-marks theirs,
But cannot reach it—so hemm'd in are they!
Wish for a thing enough, times, and again,
To importunity, though it be dumb,
The wish is given; these one day wake to find
Hindrances vanished, the work brought to their hand,
As with permit to test their fitness for it.
No weak mistrust of self their ardour damps;—
With lofty confidence and fearless zeal
They essay their powers: the goal draws near: when lo!
Some casual failure in self-mastery,
Some want of judgment, tact, or reticence,
Makes shipwreck of the whole! Do they escape,—
Barely escape, seizing their lives as prey,—
Then, in hot agony of self-abasement,